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ABSTRACT

The aim of this document is to raise the standards of educational resources designed to support education for sustainable development. Ten principles of good practice are included which should be used when selecting and developing resource materials. Each principle is supported by a number of guidance statements that exemplify good practice and which represent the means by which these principles can be achieved. (CCM)

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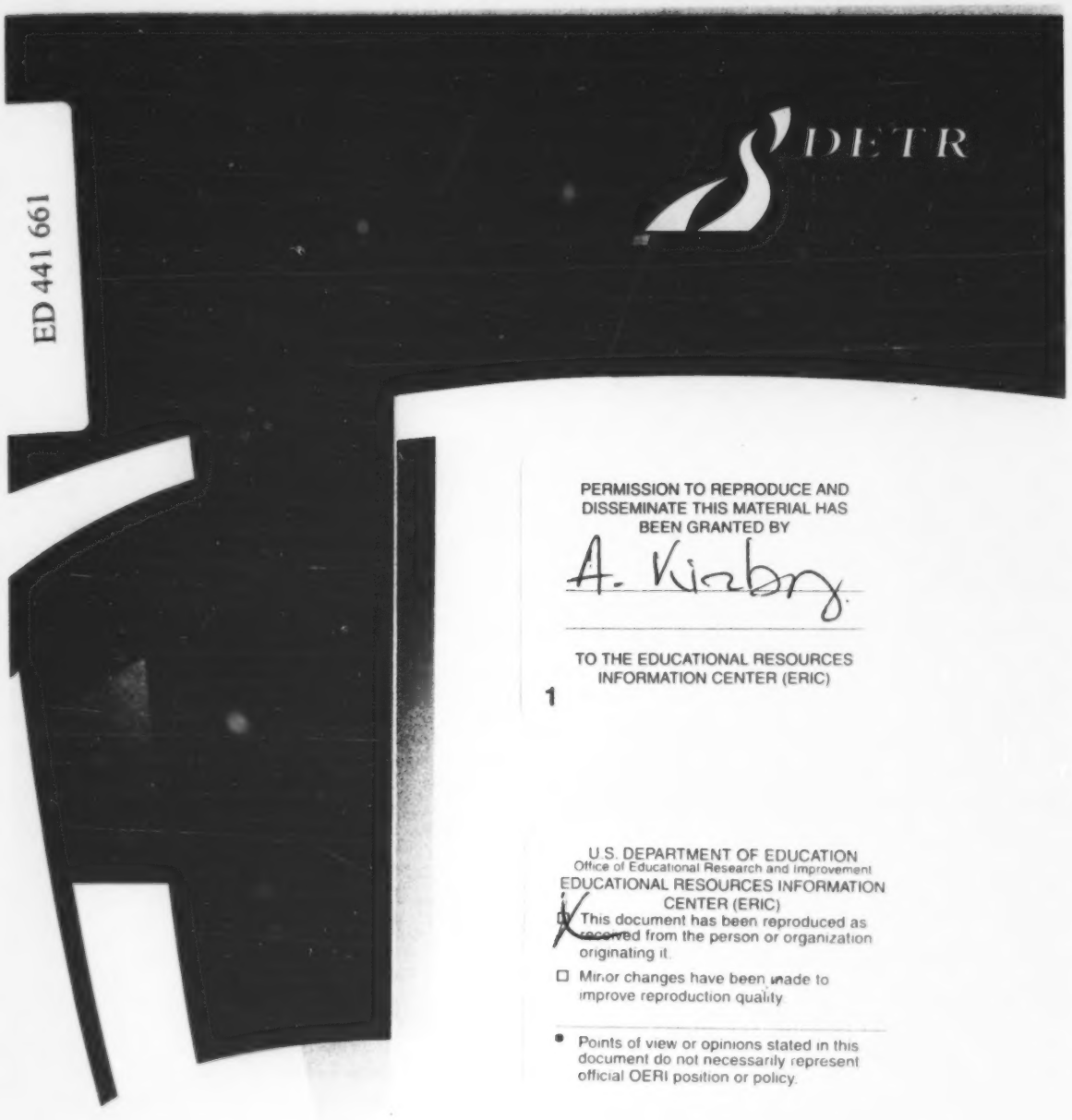

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A GUIDE TO SELECTING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Council for Environmental Education/ Department for Education and Employment/ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - A GUIDE TO SELECTING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The code of practice

As a contribution to the raising of standards of educational resources, a voluntary Code of Practice[1] has been developed by and for producers of resources which support education for sustainable development.

The importance of education in moving towards more sustainable ways of living is acknowledged by the Government and by international agreement. Agenda 21, endorsed by 180 of the world's leaders at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, speaks of:

> *"nothing less than the complete reorientation of education towards sustainable development"*

Well-produced educational resources can make an important contribution to this goal. Teachers and other educators, however, often express concern about the quality of material produced. Busy as they are, they need to be assured that resources are acceptable in both educational and sustainable development terms.

Responsible producers recognise and share this view. They accept that it is their responsibility to demonstrate to users of resources that their materials have been developed and produced in ways that follow sustainable principles. Therefore many have now agreed to adopt the voluntary Code of Practice, developed by the field itself, which is designed to improve standards in the quality of resources produced to support education for sustainable development.

What does the code do?

The Code of Practice sets out ten principles of good practice which producers commit themselves to working towards. Each principle is supported by guidance statements which illustrate how the principles might be achieved.

The ten principles making up the Code of Practice are shown on pages 3-5, together with a number of questions, based on the guidance statements, by which users may judge the extent to which producers have met their claims.

[1] ***Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: a voluntary code of practice***

Producers adopting the Code make a commitment to making information about the resource explicit and easily accessible, whether in the resource itself or on promotional material. This includes a clear statement indicating commitment to the Code.

An example of a *producer's statement*, giving information about this document, is given on page 7. This information demonstrates ways in which the resource has been developed in accordance with the Code of Practice. Clearly, it cannot be totally comprehensive, but it should provide enough evidence on which users can make an informed decision about the suitability of the resource.

It is the intention that, as more producers adopt the Code of Practice and make information more readily accessible, educators will find selecting resources, both on educational and sustainable grounds, a less onerous and time-consuming task.

Will it work?

Of course a statement by a producer, indicating commitment to the Code of Practice, does not guarantee fitness to purpose of the resource in question. Educators will always be the final arbiters in assessing what is right for them and in using resources in a balanced and appropriate way.

We believe that the Code of Practice is an important step in raising standards in the development and production of educational resources. We hope that users of resources will find it useful and look for evidence of its implementation as they continue the vital process of educating for sustainable development.

Who supports the code?

The Code of Practice has been developed by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) in consultation with its member organisations and others. A list of organisations committed to the principles of the Code is available from CEE. The Code of Practice is supported and endorsed by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Department for Education and Employment and the Sustainable Development Education Panel.

Ten principles of good practice

PRINCIPLE 1: PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Resources should foster understanding of the principles of sustainable development and the aims and significance of Agenda 21.

Does the resource:

- draw links between environmental, economic, social, political and cultural issues?
- use terms appropriately (eg citizenship, Local Agenda 21)?
- demonstrate links between global issues and the learner's own experience?
- encourage involvement and action?

PRINCIPLE 2: INTEGRITY

Any information and data provided should be accurate, current and verifiable.

Does the resource:

- state the source of information or data?
- distinguish between opinion, fact and interpretation of evidence?
- acknowledge that information is only ever partial and changes as new knowledge arises?

PRINCIPLE 3: BALANCE

When purporting to give a balanced account of an issue, resources should accurately reflect the broad range of informed opinion on the subject.

Does the resource:

- acknowledge its own inherent bias?
- acknowledge a range of legitimate views?
- make it explicit when a balanced view is *not* being given?
- clearly state the interests of producers or sponsors?
- show evidence of co-operation with others?
- support the role of educators in presenting balanced learning programmes?

PRINCIPLE 4: VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Resources should help people to explore values and develop responsible attitudes in relation to their fellow citizens and the environment, from local to global level.

Does the resource:

- help learners to explore their own values in relation to others and to the environment?
- help them to understand how these values affect their perceptions of, attitudes to and relationship with the environment?
- represent the needs and values of different groups?
- avoid stereotypes and combat prejudice?

PRINCIPLE 5: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In addressing environmental and development issues, resources should help develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to enable people to participate effectively in their resolution.

Does the resource:

- help develop critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills?
- enable learners to be more effective in bringing about change?
- help develop communication and partnership skills?

PRINCIPLE 6: USER-CENTRED APPROACH

To ensure maximum take-up, resources should be easy to use and appropriate for the intended audience.

Does the resource:

- allow for flexible use and differentiation?
- state relevance to curricula or qualifications where appropriate?
- facilitate ease of use by good layout and clear presentation?
- include sources of further support, indicating the nature of the support available?

PRINCIPLE 7: NEED

Producers should be able to demonstrate there is an identified need for the proposed resource.

Does the resource:

- clearly demonstrate its intended purpose and target audience?
- direct users to complementary resources?

PRINCIPLE 8: DEVELOPMENT

Producers should ensure that the development of the resource is inclusive, participative and has drawn on appropriate educational expertise.

Does the resource:

- demonstrate involvement by the intended audience, including evidence of trialling?
- use appropriately qualified or experienced writers/developers?
- use the chosen medium appropriately?

PRINCIPLE 9: PRODUCTION

Producers should demonstrate that the production process has followed best sustainable practice wherever possible.

Does the resource:

- demonstrate ways in which environmental impact has been reduced during production?
- avoid over-reliance on photocopying?
- employ materials appropriate to the intended use and lifespan, including ways of prolonging life, such as updates or inserts?
- include a means of evaluating the resource?

PRINCIPLE 10: PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Producers should consider the implications of promotion and distribution from the outset and ensure that they are effective, appropriate and accessible.

Does the resource:

- represent value for money? (would *you* buy it?)
- if free, justify this in sustainable and educational terms?
- have an acceptable means of distribution and promotion? (are unsolicited mailings justifiable?)
- allow for inspection copies or other means of familiarisation to be available?

and is there:

- clear and detailed information demonstrating that the resource has been developed and produced according to sustainable principles?

Glossary and background

Sustainable development is a process rather than a fixed goal. It is most commonly defined by the phrase used by the Brundtland Commission in 1987: "Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Another useful definition, adopted jointly in 1991 by IUCN - The World Conservation Union, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wide Fund for Nature, is: "Sustainable development means improving the quality of life whilst living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystem". It is a complex concept, involving social justice, equity and concern for the future, as well as environmental and development issues.

The crucial role of education in achieving the move towards a more sustainable way of life is being addressed within the UK's sustainable development strategy, initially developed in response to *Agenda 21*. A Sustainable Development Education Panel, set up by the Government in 1998, reports directly to the Secretaries of State for Education and Employment and the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Panel is developing definitions and agreed learning outcomes as the basis of a national strategy for education for sustainable development.

Agenda 21 is the blueprint for sustainable development agreed by 180 of the world's leaders at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It stresses the importance of involving all sectors of the community in order to move towards more sustainable ways of life and calls for local authorities to develop Local Agenda 21 strategies, in collaboration with their communities.

Local Agenda 21 is the process of developing local strategies for sustainable development. *Agenda 21* requires local authorities to build partnerships between sectors of the community, such as businesses, voluntary groups and young people, to develop a Local Agenda 21 action plan. It is a continuing process and activities, approaches and issues vary according to local priorities and circumstances.

References

Agenda 21: *programme of action for sustainable development.* United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. New York: United Nations, 1992.

Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: *a voluntary code of practice.* Council for Environmental Education. London: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999.

Sustainable development - producer's statement

This resource has been developed in accordance with the principles set out in *Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: a voluntary code of practice.*

Title of resource
Sustainable development: a guide to selecting educational resources

Summary/contents
Guidance to help educators assess resources, based on a voluntary Code of Practice aimed at raising standards in the development and production of educational resources to support sustainable development. Includes:

- explanation of what the Code contains and does;
- the ten priciples of good practice making up the Code;
- questions to ask to assess if a resource has been developed in acordance with the Code;
- glossary and references;
- a simple producer's statement giving details of this resource.

Target audience and intended usage
Aimed at all educators - in schools, youth work, further, higher or adult education - to raise awareness of the voluntary Code of Practice, *Supporting sustainable development through educational resources*, and to help assess whether educational resources have been produced in accordance with the Code of Practice.

Author/developer
Council for Environmental Education (CEE) in consultation with CEE's membership and under the guidance of an expert Working Group. CEE is an independent national organisation, a registered charirty, set up to influence policy and promote good practice in environmental education and education for sustainable development.

How developed/trialled
A consultation document was sent to 400 organisations and individuals. 70 responses were received and analysed. Focus groups of teachers in Lincolnshire and Staffordshire were held.

Publisher/sponsor
Published and funded by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Identification of need
Through research carried out on CEE's behalf by Loughborough University, the work of a CEE resources working group, discussions at a conference in 1995, followed by a feasibility study and general consensus and discussion in the field.

Materials/processes used in production
Printed on material containing 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp and with Volatile Organic Compound free vegetable based printer's ink

Promotion and distribution
Available free on the DETR website (htpp://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/educpanel/index.htm) and limited single copies from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7NB Tel 0870 1226 236 Fax 0870 1226 237.

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